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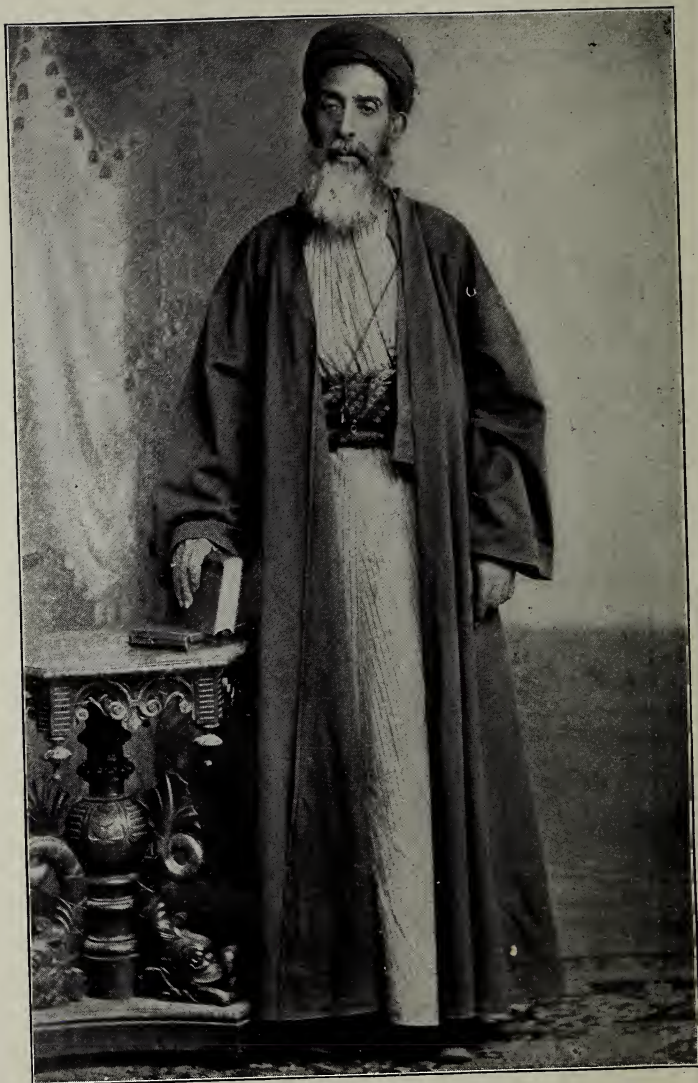
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JACOB, SON OF AARON, HIGH PRIEST OF THE
SAMARITANS.

THE HISTORY AND RELIGION OF THE SAMARITANS

BY

JACOB, SON OF AARON
HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS
AT SHECHEM, PALESTINE

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY
WILLIAM ELEAZAR BARTON, D.D.

TRANSLATED FROM THE ARABIC
BY
ABDULLAH BEN KORI

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BY JACOB, SON OF AARON, HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS
AT SHECHEM.

INTRODUCTION.

BY WILLIAM ELEAZAR BARTON, D.D.

THE author of the following history, Jacob, son of Aaron, is high priest of the Samaritans at Nâblus, Palestine, the ancient Shechem. He is now seventy-three years of age, and has been high priest for fifty-eight years. Although the custom of the Samaritans does not permit a man to officiate as priest until he is thirty years of age, Jacob was consecrated at fifteen, as he was the eldest nephew of the high priest who died at that time, and who had no sons of his own.

I learned of this book from a letter written me by the high priest himself, in which he said that he had prepared this history for an eminent English scholar, an Oxford professor, who died before the work was completed. Upon this book, the high priest declares, he spent two years of labor; and he regretted not only the loss of time, and the money which he needed, but also the opportunity to make known to Christians the doctrines of his community. He counts it a misfortune that the Samaritans are known to the Christians only through their mutual enemies, the Jews. His own feeling toward the Christian world is a very kindly one, and he has satisfaction in those references in the New Testament which show the sympathetic attitude of Jesus toward the Samaritans. He appreciates the interest of Christian travelers in himself and his people, and wishes to give them what he believes to be the true story of the Samaritan division from the Jews.

W.E.B.

After some correspondence and delay I purchased from the high priest the history he had compiled. It is in Arabic, with Scripture passages quoted in Samaritan text and in the Hebrew language. It is neatly written, and makes a manuscript volume of two hundred and ninety-six pages. Scripture references are given in Samaritan Hebrew, and repeated in the Arabic.

The Jews date the origin of the Samaritans as a people from the importation of foreigners into Northern Syria after the conquest by Sargon in 722 B. C., and the rise of their religion from the time when Manasseh, a young priest who had married a daughter of Sanballat, the Samaritan governor, refused to leave his wife at the command of Nehemiah in 432 B. C. It cannot fail to be noted with interest that the high priest rests his case on no defense of Manasseh, however oppressive the decree of Nehemiah might have been made to appear. According to his argument, which is the historic argument of his sect, the Samaritans are the original Hebrews, descendants of Joseph, except their priests, who are of the tribe of Levi. According to their tradition, it is the Jews who have gone aside, both by intermarriage with other nations, which the Samaritans still shun, and also by secession from the capital and sanctuary established by Joshua and steadfastly maintained by the faithful Samaritans to this day, and by departure from the Torah, which the Jews are alleged to have corrupted and added to.

The most interesting fact connected with the present document is the way in which the priest thrusts the wedge of his argument into a palpable hiatus, and perhaps more than one, in Old Testament history. When Palestine is settled, Shechem is the capital and sanctuary. Here the bones of Joseph are buried; here Joshua assembles the tribes; here later, even after the division, kings come to be crowned. Then, without any apparent reason, we find the Ark of the Covenant at Shiloh, and a temple there, and a priest named Eli, of whose antecedents no very definite account is given in the Old Testament, and whose name does not appear in the genealogy of the Aaronic priests in 1 Chron. vi. 3-15. Later the Ark is moved from this locality, and located in Jerusalem in the reign of David, a calamity and consequent delay occurring in the transfer. There is still another delay, accounted for by a revelation to David that not he but his son must build the Temple in Jerusalem. Thus, finally, the transfer from Shechem to Jerusalem is made, and the worship of the nation is established in what is declared by Old Testament writers after the fact to have been the place of the original divine intent; but which is unnamed in the prophecies of the establishment of the capital and sanctuary—unnamed, because, as the high priest contends, every one knew that Shechem was the place.

Into every one of these open doors of controversy the High priest enters, and brings forth what the reader may here discover. Eli, according to his history, was a usurper, a subordinate priest on Gerizim, who took advantage of the immaturity of the high priest to exalt his own ambition. He is declared to have moved his temple to Shiloh, where he counterfeited the sacred furniture, and claimed that it was original. It was the time of anarchy and godlessness: few of the people knew or cared what Eli did. He and his wicked sons there made their calling and election sure. And the true temple diminished, and finally by divine power disappeared.

It certainly is unfortunate for the argument that a miracle has to be resorted to in order to account for the disappearance of the true Ark from Gerizim; the argument is plausible up to that point. It is difficult to understand why, if Eli made a fictitious Ark, the wrath of God should not rather have displayed itself in the protection and preservation of the true one than in its disappearance, which manifestly aided the imposture. The argument is more cogent when it keeps clear of the supernatural.

Samuel, as a priest of the same illicit sanctuary, and a magician, carries the narrative on to the time of the monarchy. Pains are taken to give us Samuel's descent from Korah, "whom the earth swallowed." This is almost needless, though appropriate, in view of the alleged subsequent behavior of Samuel; who, more than any other man after Eli, is held responsible for the division of Israel, the setting up of false shrines, and the establishment under David of a modern and unauthorized capital in the city now called Jerusalem.

The priests of Nob, who have been difficult to identify, here appear as Samaritan priests, who, befriending David when he flees from Saul, are heeded by him later when but for their warning David would have built a temple in Jerusalem; so that David himself, bad as he is here represented, heeded that warning and that of the death of Uzziah, and stopped short of the sin of building a temple in the Jebusite city. That act of impiety, however, was finally committed by Solomon, who also built another false temple for his Egyptian wife, and did other gross and abominable acts.

The interest in this narrative grows with the reflection that here is a contemporary voice of antiquity, calling for a rehearing of a case long since decided by the court of the world. In some respects it is entirely unique. Most of the messages from the past come to us in fragments exhumed from ruins; the men who chiseled the inscriptions were buried beneath them, their own dust mingling with their work. But this isolated and almost forgotten little sect, instead of speaking to us from the tomb, shouts faintly from the top of its holy mountain its unheeded protest against the judgment

of the world. It is certainly a dramatic picture which this document brings before our vision. If Hammurabi could rise from the dead to interpret to us his newly discovered code; or if in the heart of Mesopotamia a little sect could be discovered with extant ceremonies and a living literature still derived from the customs and based on the laws therein contained, and the present head of the community could speak to us, defending the code of Hammurabi against all modern legislation, it would be hardly more dramatic.

A pathetic interest attaches to the fact that the high priest will rejoice in the publication of this document. He cannot read it in English, but will know that his book has been faithfully translated, and that at last his poor and diminutive sect has spoken to the world in defense of its right to worship God on Mount Gerizim. Some copies will be sent him, and if he is able to sell them for a trifle to English-speaking tourists who visit Nâblus, he will have succeeded in telling to a world of strange speech and greatly altered customs the meaning of his sect, which seems to the modern visitor a most interesting anacronism.

The translation which follows is of the first chapter of the book. Whether the nine remaining chapters, most of which are much more brief, will be published soon, has not yet been determined. A synopsis of their contents is given in this chapter, and this one contains an outline of the entire history of the Samaritans and of the argument on which they base their belief. Interesting as some of the remaining chapters are, this one is, for practical purposes, a complete work. I have other documents in my possession, and more on the way, which may prove of sufficient value to warrant translation.

The work of translation has been performed for me by Mr. Abdullah Ben Kori, instructor in the Texas Christian University of Waco, Texas, who possesses intimate acquaintance with modern Arabic. My thanks are due to him, and to Professor Herbert L. Willet, D.D., of the University of Chicago, who has assisted in some of the renderings.

I acknowledge the kindness of Dr. Gaskorn Wright, of the Church Missionary Hospital at Nâblus, who has greatly assisted me in my dealings with the high priest. The priest writes his letters in Arabic, and takes them to the mission, where they are translated, and both original and translation are forwarded. It is my purpose to have this history reprinted in pamphlet form and to present copies to the high priest for the purpose of supplying English-speaking tourists. To such I gladly commend the work which Dr. Wright is doing. I also acknowledge the kindness of Mr. E. W. Warren, of Three Oaks, Mich., whose interest in the Samaritans has been of assistance to me.—WILLIAM E. BARTON.

DEDICATION.

IN THE NAME OF THE MOST MERCIFUL GOD. Praise be to him; for he has appropriated for himself rulership and eternity, and has clothed the mind of his good worshipers with a true light, and from the seas of the abundance of his wisdom has caused them to drink until they obtained the highest estate in righteousness; and has caused each one of them to ascend to the highest degree, thereby attaining paradise, the resurrection, and the meeting-day; also he has confirmed their hearts in their truthfulness, being fully enlightened by his shining light, and has poured upon them the treasure of his wisdom in an exceedingly free manner. Happy are they because of what he has caused them to drink, and because of those who have been gathered to them from the sea of multitudes, but who are scattered in this world. May God make them faithful, and also them among those who have imitated them, and among those who have taken hold of and have become devoted to the righteous Light of their hearts; and that is not impossible to God. I praise him with the praise of a servant who is sunk in sin, hoping from the kindness of his Personality pardon and forgiveness, hoping the entrance of the garden, for the sake and through the prayers of our lord and our prophet Moses, the brother of Aaron, upon whom be the best commendation of the most perfect salutation.

INTRODUCTION.

It was during the year 1213 of the kingdom of Israel [i. e. of the Hegira, or 1885 A.D.], which corresponds to the year 3532 of the entrance of the children of Israel, that there came to our country one of the scholars of the school of Oxford in the land of England, and remained in the outskirts of our city Nâblus for a period of three days. He presented himself to me, and asked of me that I write him the ceremonies of our religion, and the

order of our prayers at every feast, and at the beginning of every month, and on the days of the Sabbath, as well as on every day; and also concerning our religious duties and customs, and about the funerals of our dead ones, and about the celebration of our marriages, and the rest of our customs. Also he desired to know what we do in the Feast of our Passover in the mountain of Gerizim. I assented to his demand, and began composing this pleasant book, and the said book follows.

This servant says that there came to him several questions from the highest scholars of Europe in regard to the origin of the Israelite-Samaritan religion, and concerning the orders of their prayers in the regular days, and the orders of their prayers in the festival days, and when the separation from the Jewish people took place, and many other questions. I felt it a duty to gather and compose and write up this book, and I divided it in ten chapters.

AN ANALYSIS OF THE ENTIRE WORK.

The first chapter concerns the Samaritan people, and from which tribe of the tribes of Israel it is, and concerning the causes of their separation from the Jewish people, and in what time such a separation took place, and concerning the causes of their being surnamed with the name of Samaria, and how great was their number when they separated and set themselves apart, and concerning their present number.

The second chapter concerns the belief of the Samaritan people as to the direction in prayer, which is towards the mountain of Gerizim, according to the direction of the blessed Torah. It also contains the proof that this mountain is the selected place of the house of God, and that upon it the shekinah was placed during the life of our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace and the gift of divine favor), and that it is the true place of worship. It contains also a reply to the Jews who have denied it, and a

refutation of their argument by the written directions concerning it, inasmuch as they exchange another place in lieu of it.

The third chapter concerns the observance of the Sabbath among the Samaritan people.

The fourth chapter concerns the circumcision and the directions for it among the Samaritan people. It concerns also the differences which exist between them and the Jews regarding this statute, according as the Samaritan people do to-day, and have done from ancient times.

The fifth chapter concerns the reckoning of time among the Samaritans, and how they find it out, and their means of ascertaining it. Also it relates to the mention of their feasts, and how religious they become in them; and the mentioning of offerings of the Passover, and its obligatory character and its observance; and also their fasts and their visitations and mortifications, and the differences regarding these matters which exist between them and the Jewish people, and the reply to the aforesaid tribe concerning its variations.

The sixth chapter concerns the defilements and their various forms, the method of purification as it is accepted by the Samaritans, and has been their practice from ancient times until to-day.

The seventh chapter mentions what the Samaritan people believe concerning the directions of what should be slaughtered for food and sacrifices and its conditions, and what is not allowed them from the various kinds of fowl, and what is not permissible for them to eat from the two kinds [fowl and beasts]; and what they are required to set apart from every sacrifice, because it is not permissible to eat it on account of its holiness. It tells their custom also concerning the prohibition about castrated animals, and concerning the prohibition of slaughtering pregnant animals; and concerning the prohibition

of blood ; and the mentioning of the differences which exist between the Samaritan people and the Jews in these matters, and the method they follow in these regards, and what they practice at the present time.

The eighth chapter concerns the mention of the law of marriage as it is observed by this people, and who of the women is allowed to be married, and who is not, and what is essential in the observance of the law of marriage, and concerning who should be divorced, and the method they follow in these matters, even in these days.

The ninth chapter affirms the unaltered character of the Torah among the Samaritan people, and that the blessed Torah which is in their hands has never suffered any alteration, and that it is unchanging in its requirements, and has never been altered throughout the ages.

The tenth chapter concerns the dead among the Samaritan people and the necessary things accompanying it, and concerning their belief in the meeting-day, and concerning the condition of man from the time of his departure from this earth until God shall bring him back in the day of judgment, and concerning the veracity of their belief as to the days when questions shall be asked and accounts shall be rendered, and when rewards shall be given and punishments administered as it is affirmed by the plain statements of the law and traditions, according as it is accepted to-day, and God knows best.

FIRST CHAPTER:—CONCERNING THE ORIGIN OF THE SAMARITAN PEOPLE AND FROM WHAT TRIBE OF THE TRIBES OF ISRAEL THEY ARE, AND CONCERNING THE CAUSES OF THEIR SEPARATION FROM THE JEWISH PEOPLE, AND WHEN THEY SEPARATED AND TURNED ASIDE FROM THEM, AND CONCERNING THE CAUSES WHICH LED TO THEIR SURNAMES WITH THE WORD "SAMARIA," AND CONCERNING THEIR NUMBER AT PRESENT.

What this Book will Undertake to Prove.—What is an af-

firmed fact among the aforesaid Samaritan people is that they are of the children of Israel, and that they are those who have remained faithful to the Law of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace), and they are those who still cling to the five books, which have descended through him, and are called the Torah, without alteration and without accepting the addition to and the subtraction from it, and that the Torah which is in their hands is the true original and faultless Torah in all its sentences, pronunciations, and its style. In favor of this they can adduce a strong argument, which shall be stated later on. They have also a strong reply to the Jewish people as to their claim that the Samaritans are not of Israel, of which an account shall be given in this chapter.

The Samaritans the True Israelites.—The origin of this people is of the tribe of our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace), who are the descendants of Ephraim and Manasseh. Their priests are of the house of Levi, the descendants of Aaron (upon whom be peace). Once there followed this people some of the other tribes, though now there is none among them who is not from the tribe of our lord Joseph (upon whom be peace), excepting the family of the priesthood, which is of the tribe of Levi, as we have already stated.

Gerizim the Original Holy Place.—Now the causes of their separation from the remnant of the tribes of Israel and the causes of their attachment to the faith which they now have and which differs in many points from the faith of the Jews are many. The principal cause happened during the life of Eli, the priest, who lived in the year 280 of the entrance of the children of Israel into the land of Canaan. For when the children of Israel (according to the chronicles with the Samaritan people) entered the holy land, their high priest was the wise Eleazar the son of Aaron (upon whom be peace). His place of dwell-

ing was in Gerizim, where he served in the tabernacle, which was built in the wilderness, according to the commandments of the Truth (may He be extolled), and according to the plan of our lord Moses (upon whom be peace), as it was given him from Him (may He be extolled). Those who made its vessels were the wise men Bezaleel and Eliab, and other skilled men who joined in with them, as it is narrated in the Holy Torah.

This tabernacle our lord Joshua (who is the first among the the blessed) built upon the mountain of Gerizim, according to the divine commandment which was given to our lord Moses (upon whom be peace). The tabernacle was built upon this mountain six years after the entrance of the children of Israel into the Holy Land. It remained in this mountain throughout the life of our lord Eleazar, during the life of our lord Phinehas, his son, and during the life of our lord Abishua, his son, and during the life of his son, our lord Shesha, and during the life of his son, our lord Bacha.

The Succession of the Priesthood.—And after Bacha, the high priest, there came our lord Aza (upon them be peace), and when the aforesaid Aza became the high priest, the number of his years was twenty-three, and during his leadership the director of the taxes and the director of the sacrifices upon the stone altar (which was outside of the tabernacle, according as it was commanded to be built in this mountain, and not to be confused with the brazen altar, which was within the temple) was Eli, of whom mention has been already made. He was of the family of Aaron, that is of the sons of our lord Ithamar, a brother of our lord Eleazar (upon whom be peace), and was well advanced in years, for his age at that time was sixty years.

And at that time the high-priesthood was to fall upon the descendants of the family of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron (upon them be peace), as it is clearly indicated in the

book of Numbers, the twenty-fifth chapter, the eleventh verse, where it is stated "Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, the son of Aaron the priest, has turned away my wrath from the children of Israel through his zeal, which is like unto my zeal, against their sins; therefore, I did not destroy them to their last by mine anger, and for this I have said to him, 'Behold, I have given him a covenant of peace; and it shall be a covenant of priesthood to him, and to his descendants after him, until the last from his loins, an eternal testament of priesthood.' Finis" (and this quotation is translated from the Hebrew). Therefore, the high-priesthood became settled upon the house of our lord Phinehas (upon whom be peace). And thus, when the high priest Bacha died, his son Aza became his successor. Thus the aforesaid Eli became the one who offered burnt offerings upon the stone altar, and under his supervision were the revenues and tithes, and he was second in authority over the house of Levi; but the high priest Aza was over him, and, as it has been already stated, the high priest was younger in years than he. Eli became rich through the surplus of the revenues, which were under his supervision; and therefore, he was inclined to take away the high-priesthood from the high priest Aza, that he might be greater than he, on account of his greater age and on account of the fact that the high priest Aza was younger than he.

The Advent of Sorcery into Israel.—It happened that, nine years before Aza became high priest, the king-judge of Israel, Antael, passed to the mercy of God, and the fame of this king grew, and became very well known as to courage and rulership. Therefore, the captainship of the armies fell upon Samson. He was a heroic man and of great strength. He became engaged in many wars and quarrels, and greatly afflicted the nations round about, and destroyed many nations in those times. For these reasons the conditions of the children of Israel were

changed, and their purposes became different and their plans became rotten, with the change of heart of the aforesaid Eli.

And there appeared among the children of Israel certain groups of men who were inclined to follow the licentious things, and who fraternized with the Gentiles and intermarried with them. And those who paid attention to religion were very few, some of them separated themselves, and followed other gods of the gods of strangers, and worshiped them, and were led astray. Great negligence as to the conversion of these apostates was evident. Every one of them was busied with his worldly affairs; and when God knew their evil purposes, and the change in their conditions, he incited against them their enemies. Therefore, these enemies planned to take vengeance against them. And they read in the books of Balaam that those peoples could neither be corrupted nor destroyed except through their faith in sorcery and their following it; and that, just as they had become defiled by their sorcery and had denied their law, then their rottenness would become apparent through it, and their destruction would be possible. Therefore, they began to discover all matters belonging to sorcery, and they sent a party of those who had knowledge of that art, and sped them to the land of the children of Israel. They arrived and entered, and went in and out among them, and there was none who could hold back the crowds from them; and corruption became prevalent even among the priests. And to some of those who were prodigal, and who were wise in the ways of the world, the sorcerers disclosed the art of sorcery. They entered into it heartily and learned its methods, and their number was increased until it became a hundred men, and they abandoned the right way of praying toward the noble mountain, that is the mountain of Gerizim, and they worshiped there the foreign gods, and offered sacrifices to the idols, and corruption rooted itself deeply, and the

Philistines were victorious against the hero Samson, and then what was contained in the souls appeared.

The Apostasy of Eli.—In that time a quarrel took place between Eli, the son of Sephna, of whom mention was made, and our lord Aza, the son of Bacha. Eli wished to be promoted over Aza. He, therefore, began to gather in his friends, and to tell them in a boastful manner that it was not decent for him to serve a child. Said he, “I cannot suffer it upon myself, and I pray you to refuse to submit yourself to him”; and he began to bribe, and to induce them, until he had a large party with him.

They told him, “We are yours, at your service, and ready to do your orders. Command us whatever you desire, for we will not disobey your word.”

Therefore, he caused them to swear that they would be his followers in all his actions; and they made with him a covenant to that effect. And they proposed to him that he should accomplish his purpose through witchcraft, because he had learned it from the foreigners in order to accomplish his purpose. His thoughts were occupied all the time with his ambition, but nevertheless he continued to offer sacrifices upon the stone altar.

One day he offered a meal offering upon the altar without salt, through forgetfulness, on account of the fact that his thoughts were continually occupied with something else. Aza, the high priest, knew and understood all that. Therefore, he rebuked him, and that made Eli angry. Immediately his followers apostatized, and all those who were inclined likewise, and there remained of them among the children of Israel only those who dwelt near by the mountain of Gerizim, of the villages and cities like Nâblus and like Palestine and the regions of Jabesh. Some of them followed Aza, the son of Bacha, and some of them followed Eli, the son of Sephna. Of them the

tribe of Joseph stood with the high priest Aza, and some of Judah and of the tribe of Benjamin stood for Eli, the son of Sephna.

Therefore, Eli went to their dwelling-places and lived in Shiloh, but the high priest Aza remained in Har Gerizim; and that is how it came about. But the majority of the children of Israel who were scattered in the different places did not know of this event, because they were too much occupied in their worldly affairs. Some of them were even devoted to idol worship, and others were in slavery to the Philistines and the Canaanites.

When Eli arrived at Shiloh, he dwelt in and fortified it, and for these many reasons the children of Israel became disunited. Eli used to send any one whom he knew of the children of Israel to tell them that he desired them to come to witness the miracles and signs in Shiloh. Moreover, Eli had taken with him many copies of the writings of our lord Ithamar of the holy law, and among them he had a roll. He made for it a chest, or an ark, similar to the chest in the tabernacle, and he overlaid it with gold, and made for it a lid, with cherubim, according as it was in the tabernacle. He claimed that it was the ark of the testimonies, and that he got hold of it by divine means. There gathered about him a large crowd in Shiloh, and he built small places of worship, and he fashioned in Shiloh everything like the noble tabernacle, and he built upon it an altar after the fashion which is in the holy tabernacle, and the people who followed him offered sacrifices. He did not change any of the Torah, which is the five books of Moses, but he claimed for the worship of God a different place instead of the true one, saying that this was by the command of God, according to his pretension, and therefore (as he claimed) he removed the ark of testimonies from the mountain of Gerizim, and built for it a tabernacle in Shiloh.

The Disappearance of the Tabernacle.—Now, because the children of Israel rebelled against the commandments of God, and because they have become disunited, the Lord (may he be extolled) hid the holy tabernacle from their sight, and the story of its disappearance will be narrated later on.

When Eli learned of the disappearance of the aforesaid tabernacle, his influence became great, and he affirmed that the tabernacle which he had built was the ancient tabernacle; and a majority of the children of Israel began to follow him, and to go to his tabernacle, with the exception of the tribe of Joseph, and all those who had remained in the service of the high priest Aza, and the tribe of Levi. And since those days, and during these present times, the aforesaid tribe has differed from the tribes of Israel, remaining true to the mountain of Gerizim and true to the house of Aza, and they and all their friends remained dwelling in the mountain of Gerizim, continuing to be favorable to Aza, and refusing to follow Eli. Enmity arose between the followers of Eli and the followers of Aza, and it became so great that even religion differed among them, mention of which will be made later on.

Eli and his Sons.—Now let us return to the mention of Eli and his family. Eli had two sons, one of them was called Hophni and the other was called Phinehas. Seeing the rebellion of their father, they followed him. They were sons of Belial. They used to gather the women beautiful to look upon, and did shameful things with them, and used also to feed them of the holy offerings of their tabernacle. They had no fear of God, and knew not the duties of priesthood toward the people. And when a man of their people came to the tabernacle to offer sacrifices, those children used to go and take the meat before the dedicated portion was taken from it, and used to feed from it any one at will, and no one prevented them.

Their actions were therefore displeasing to God, and their sins were exceedingly great. In spite of that their father never tried to turn them away. The highest and most respectable persons of the Samaritan nation who were then in those regions witnessed all those actions, and they have in their histories a longer narrative in which the history of these two children and that of their father Eli is mentioned.

During the life of their father the children of Israel were divided into three sections. One division followed the laws and customs of the Gentiles and worshiped their gods, another division followed amusements and sports, and another division remained with Eli; but one division followed the great high priest Aza. They continued to visit the sacred mountain. Therefore their conditions were changed, and there came about the vengeance of God which befell them. Their eyes became blinded, the angels of God left them; inspiration was taken away from their leaders, and the holy light which used to appear within the holy tabernacle disappeared; and the divine fire which never was missed whenever sacrifice was offered went away. And upon them was fulfilled the threatening which is recorded in the Torah, according to the saying in the book of Deuteronomy, chapter thirty-one, verse eighteen: "I shall surely cause to hide my presence from them on that day on account of the wickedness which they have done, because they erred in following strange gods."

Details of the Hiding of the Tabernacle.—Now when this took place, their number amounted to over seventy thousand persons. They stayed by the high priest Aza and defended him; and there is an account of this also in the history of the Samaritan people. And when this separation took place and corruption prevailed, the anger of God was great, and he caused the holy tabernacle to disappear which was upon Mount Geri-

zim, because it was of no value. And the history of its disappearance is as follows :

The high priest Aza used to go into the temple, and once, while he was going according to his custom, he saw nothing of the former signs of God's pleasure, and behold there was black darkness in the house. He was frightened. This took place on Monday morning of the completion of the fiftieth. He continued to go into the temple during Monday, Tuesday, and Wednesday ; but on Thursday he beheld that the darkness had been greatly increased and extended, and had covered the walls of the place. He found out also that whenever he went into the inner part that portion disappeared. And when he went from the temple he saw there was a cave near by the place, on the site of the temple, and that cave was open, and he had never seen it before that day, neither he nor any of the servants of the temple. God revealed to Aza the high priest that he should place the precious vessels of the tabernacle inside of that cave, because it was evident that the Lord (may He be extolled) did not create such a cave in that place except for that purpose. The appearance of the cave was quite an assurance to him, and he saw that it would be right to place the tabernacle in that cave. First, on account of fear of their enemies, lest they should come up, and take it violently from them, and pollute its holiness. Secondly, through the signs which indicated to them that that was the will of God, and as such it ought to be obeyed. Thirdly, because there was abomination in the observance of the service of the tabernacle. The high priest Aza therefore began to gather the holy garments, and the vessels of gold and silver, and to place them in that cave. They carried into the cave the ark of testimonies ; and when they had brought into it all the vessels of the tabernacle, and as soon as they left it, the mouth of the cave closed immediately by the power of God. When the high priest

Aza and those who were with him witnessed such a display, immediately the high priest began to write upon the mouth of the cave what took place. When in the morning of the following day, according to his custom, he came to pray, and he directed himself toward the place where the cave was, he did not find it, nor even one trace of the writings which he had carved, and the word of God was fulfilled, inasmuch as the temple had been hidden.

Repentance immediately took possession of him, and he began to bewail the evil of his times, and what had befallen him, and what had befallen the family of his father, and what had befallen the children of Israel in those days. The Levites, who were then his followers, together with the leaders in Israel, gathered unto him when that event took place, and he made them acquainted with what had happened in detail, from the beginning to the end.

When the leaders of the children of Israel knew of the wrath of God, and of the breaking down of the law, and the belittling of the holy tabernacle, and that the pleasure of God had disappeared from among them, they rent their garments, and they cried aloud, and they began to bewail the evil of their doings; but I shall set aside the narration of this event in their history, because it fills the heart with sadness. That much is for those who have kept themselves on the side of the high priest Aza in righteousness. And that took place in the year 3055 of the creation of the world.

The Temple at Shiloh.—Let us now return to the mention of what Eli the priest did after he had gone to Shiloh in the days when God was pleased. There he made for himself a shekinah, as we have stated, and he made it after the fashion of the holy tabernacle and that was done through his directions and through the direction of a man called Abalachoh. They prospered in

their plans, for large numbers of the children of Israel followed them. But some of the children of Israel who were living in the regions round did not know of this event, and whenever they came to offer tithes and sacrifices, the friends of Eli the priest used to meet them in the streets, and used to take them to Shiloh to the tabernacle. And they used to mislead them, and to explain to them that this was the original tabernacle; and they used to convince them, because of their ignorance of facts, and because they were brought up among the Gentiles. And the disappearance of the holy tabernacle which was in the holy mountain helped them a great deal. Praise be to God who does what he wishes.

Samuel the Sorcerer.—Immediately after that event took place, there came to Shiloh a man from Sophin of the children of Levi by the name Elkanah, from the family of Pahat, of the children of Abisoph, the son of Korah, the son of Iashar, who rebelled against Moses (upon whom be peace), and coveted from him the great high-priesthood to take the place of our lord Aaron (upon whom be peace), and whom, that is Korah, the earth swallowed. This man Elkanah was of his seed, and he was the father of Ishmael, whom the Jews called Samuel. His father brought him to Eli to the tabernacle, and the ancestors of Samuel the son of Elkanah, the son of Nor, the son of Azariah, the son of Haphnia, the son of Tahat, the son of Abiso, the son of Korah, who has been mentioned before. There is a clearer narrative concerning them given in the book of history, but we mention it briefly.

When the aforesaid Samuel grew and became a man, Eli took him and taught him whatever he knew, and brought him up according to his plan. And he followed Eli in his ways; because his children knew what their father knew, for the ways which he trod were very clear to them, and their rebellious conduct be-

came known among the people. And some of his people left him on account of his evil doings, and the doings of his children, who have been already mentioned. Therefore, he was compelled to take this young child in their stead, in order that he might succeed him, because he adopted him as his son. And this Samuel was obedient to Eli, and he was a sorcerer and knew things well, and was of a bright intellect; and he learned science and astrology through Abrahmich, the greatest philosopher of those days. His origin was from the land of the Greeks. And the cause of the presence of this sorcerer in this land was that when he heard that a separation had taken place between the tribes of Israel, he took advantage of this, and befriended Eli and Samuel.

And this man Abrahmich began to corrupt and to mislead the children of Israel. He tried to instigate quarrels among them. He did well to some of the children of Israel in order that they might worship his gods. He taught them witchcraft and the production of phenomena. The heart of Eli was indeed stubborn to turn aside from his plan, and behold the result. They learned from him witchcraft and the production of phenomena. Even Samuel claimed prophecy, and they believed his claim. Thus Samuel knew well the purpose of Eli, his master. Therefore, he remained in his service, and obeyed him, and both of them directed their people after their own directions.

The War with the Philistines.—And when the surrounding nations heard of the separation of these peoples, a great part of them who were living then among the children of Israel, as in the land of Palestine and Gaza and other places, planned to go to Shiloh, and to make war against Eli, and against his people where the seat of rulership was. Therefore, a great part of the children of Israel joined them, and they became known, and their name was familiar to all the rest of the nations. Against them there came the army of the Philistines, and made war with

them. And Eli sent men to meet them, and a battle took place. And the men of Eli were defeated, and some of them fled, and some of them were killed, about four thousand. Some of them returned to Eli, and told him that the cause of the defeat was that the golden ark was not with them. Therefore, he gave them the ark which he had made and his two children, Hophni and Phinehas. And they were differently equipped from the first time. The nations around them surrounded them on all sides, and they killed many of them. They took the golden ark from them, and killed also Hophni and Phinehas. And news of that event was brought to Eli while he was sitting in a chair near by the gate, and they told him that his two sons had been killed, and that the golden ark had been taken away from them, and that the sword was killing all the people, as fire eats wood. When Eli knew and understood and realized this misfortune, he fell immediately from the chair on his back, and his neck was broken, because he was old in age. It is said that he was in that time about ninety-eight years old. And when one of his daughters-in-law, the wife of one of his sons, heard this, and she was with child, her hour came to give birth to the child, and she died suddenly.

The Monarchy under Saul.—Samuel, the disciple of the afore-said Eli, came to his people, and began to preach to them, and they made him their ruler after the death of Eli, and he began to display to them his abilities. And he beguiled some of them through the things which he had been taught by his master, and he had many followers, and he offered many sacrifices in every place he desired. And he had two sons; the name of the first-born was Joal, and the name of the second Abiah, two wicked sons, who were known for their unpleasant conduct among their friends.

Therefore, the people of Samuel came to him and told him, saying, "Behold, thou art old, and thy two sons are not walking in a straight way, and the purpose of our gathering here is that you should elect for us a king who shall judge for us instead of your sons."

This gathering displeased him, but in spite of him he had to elect for them a man from the tribe of Benjamin, by the name of Saul, and he anointed him as king over them.

And Saul did evil during his reign, and he misled a large part of the children of Israel who followed him, and none remained true to the son of Phinehas who was dwelling in the holy mountain, that is Mount Gerizim. He was keeping up the religious customs of the tribe of Joseph.

Such corruption continued, and the partisanship of the children of Israel took hold of them during his reign until one division of them was the tribe of Joseph, and another division was with his people in Shiloh, and another division went neither one way nor the other. . And Saul, the famous king of the children of Israel, did nothing except through the command of Samuel. And Samuel and Saul and Jesse and David planned to war against the tribe of Joseph, because they did not follow them in Shiloh, and because they were not inclined toward their purposes, and because when they were weak they made peace with the other nations on account of the great apostasy of Saul and Samuel. They made covenant with the nations, and therefore the enmity became deeply rooted between them, and they hated each other terribly. And the people of Saul planned to go and destroy the tabernacle of the tribe of Joseph, and to make their place a desert, and to ruin their towns and to leave no inhabitants therein. He therefore came with his armies to the meadow of Boha, and they surprised the tribe of Joseph in the Feast of Tabernacles, while they were quiet and not aware of their misfor-

tune, and they killed whomever they found, and they went upon different roads, and killed even the high priest Shisha, the son of the great high priest Aza, in the great city of Sallum. They killed and burned both the great and the small ones, and they went up to the mountain of Gerizim, and destroyed the place of worship and the stones of the Law, and they took hold of the noble ones who fled to that place and killed them, and they remained for days destroying the citadel of Lozal, because it was a great town, and they camped in the meadow of Boha for thirty days, and whomever they found they killed. The tribe of Joseph was forbidden to come near Mount Gerizim for a period of twenty-two years. They could not make any pilgrimages to it, but whenever they prayed they turned their faces toward it, but some of them used to go to it in secret. Thus their feasts used to pass and to take place without any religious show, and the Passover and the Pentecost and the Feast of Tabernacles used to pass without any pilgrimages, and the people of Saul used to go to Mount Gerizim as to any other field.

But the Torah, which was among the children of Israel in the original character, is still kept in good condition among the Samaritan people, until this day, with no additions or diminutions, and even the Sabbath and the festival days are still the same.

In that distress which was caused by the people of Saul, the tribe of Joseph gathered together in the midst of the night, and planned to flee from their enemies, and some of them dwelt with the king of Bosas and Saisar, and the trace of the rest of them was lost unto this day.

Saul and his three children and the bearer of his arms died in one day, and God avenged himself of him according as he deserved, and he took away his kingdom from him and gave it to

David, the son of Jesse, and of that there is another account, and I do not see the necessity of placing it in this book.

The Reign of David and the Removal of Eli's Ark.—David ruled in the city of Hebron according to the desire of the tribe of Judah when he was thirty years old, and they brought him to the base of Mount Gerizim, and they gave him there the kingdom. And David went to war against the Philistines until he took from them many cities and conquered the city of Jabish, which is called among the Jews Ælia, but which they called afterwards Jerusalem, and they placed the seat of his kingdom in it, and he removed the golden chest which Eli made in Shiloh and brought it to the aforesaid Jabish. And when he brought it to his place of dwelling, the priest who was to receive it from the vehicle was tossed by the cow and he died. That was the cow which was pulling the vehicle. David became exceedingly sad because of the death of the priest, and he immediately commanded the chest to be placed in the house of one of his men, and they placed it at the house of a widow, and it remained with her for a long time.

Reasons for David's not building a Temple in Jerusalem.—Then the tribe of Judah came and asked David to build for them a temple in order that they might place in it the chest which was with that widow. But this news reached the great high priest who was with the Samaritan people, whose name was Yaire, and he was living in the country of the mountain of Gerizim when this news reached him. He sent immediately a notice to David to the effect that it was permissible and necessary for him to build the temple upon the mountain of Gerizim, according to the writing found in the Torah, which was with both people before alterations were made. And the reason of the correspondence of Yaire the high priest with King David was the acquaintance which they had with each other, and the strong

friendship when David fled from the presence of Saul, the king,¹ and used to visit the aforesaid high priest, and used to go around with the tribe of Joseph, and used in those days to offer his tithes and to fulfill his vows in the mountain of Gerizim, as the Samaritan people copied in their historical books from their ancestors.

So when David became king, he decided to build the temple in Jabish, and so it became necessary for the high priest Yaire to remind the king, and to exhort. When the aforesaid correspondence took place between David and the high priest Yaire, David desisted. He refrained from building the temple in the city of Jabish. Nevertheless, he could not differ from his people in favor of the high priest Yaire, and therefore he explained to Yaire, and desisted from building any temple, either in Jabish or in the mountain of Gerizim. He offered excuses to his people, and said that God did not want him to build for him a house because he had shed much blood, but the child who should succeed him he should build a house for him. David therefore refrained from doing the work after he had gathered together all the materials for building the temple of gold and silver and bronze and wood, and he continued to do so until he was gathered unto his fathers.

Solomon's Idolatries.—His wife Alisha,² the wife of Ooriah, was the mother of Solomon. The latter became the king of Israel after many events; and when he took hold of the kingdom of Israel he reigned for a long time; and after he had avenged himself of many of the children of Israel, and ruled over the tribe of Joseph, and avenged himself of them, and oppressed them, he began to sacrifice wherever he wanted on the high places; and learned philosophy and many other sciences; and was married unto many Amorite, Moabite, Canaanite, and Sid-

¹ Cf. 1 Sam. xxi. 1-7.

² Bathsheba, wife of Uriah.

onite women, and he took for himself the daughter of Pharaoh, the king of Egypt, and it is said that he had of women one thousand. There is another account of him in the historical book of those people, and he weakened exceedingly the tribe of Joseph.

All the kings of the earth were subject unto him, and he gathered much money until he became hard-hearted, and the year of his sitting upon the throne of the kingdom in lieu of his father was the 480th of the exit of the children of Israel, which is the one hundred and twentieth year of the disappearance of the temple from the mountain of Gerizim. In the fourth year of the aforesaid king, he began to build the temple, whose foundation his father David had dug in the threshing-place of the Jebusites. And he built a large temple, and he spent all his funds in doing it. And he made in the aforesaid temple seven candlesticks of gold, because the vessels which Eli the priest had made in his temple in Shiloh were stolen by the Canaanites, and nothing was left except the chest which he had made. But Solomon made seven of that kind of vessel, and he plastered the walls of the temple and its roof and ground-floor with gold, and he made in it the images of all the birds, and he built this temple and placed it over wheels well fashioned, in order that he might move it wherever he chose. Solomon built this temple through the genii, and he built for himself a judgment-seat, whose description is beyond the power of the tongue of man. And he built a house for the daughter of Pharaoh through one hundred and seven of his workmen. And he made three hundred towers of gold and silver. And when the dedication of the temple took place he offered on the altar twelve thousand sheep¹ as a sac-

¹This is one tenth the number given in 1 Kings viii. 63 and 1 Chron. vii. 5. It will be remembered that Kings and Chronicles sometimes present this discrepancy of a tenfold difference.

rifice, and he gathered all his subjects, and he distributed among them offerings, and he placed the chest of gold in the temple, which Eli the priest had made.

But the tribe of Joseph, of the house of Phinehas, and all those who gathered among them, did not incline toward him, and did not surrender to his command. And when King Solomon saw that the tribe of Joseph refused to obey his command, he immediately caused to rule over them the naughty Jeroboam, and the aforesaid became their ruler, and he was a terrible ruler. When he ruled over them he took away their possessions from them, and gathered much money from them, and afterwards he rebelled against Solomon throughout all his life, and caused them to be persecuted, and he caused them to serve him.

The Reign of Rehoboam—And when Solomon the king died, his people claimed that the temple which he had built by the command of God was visited by fire from him above, and had devoured all the offerings which he had offered in it, and they claimed that Jabish is the chosen place, and that it is related to the mountain of Gerizim. This has been what they have believed from time immemorial. And when King Solomon died, his people took his son Rehoboam and brought him to the regions of Joseph to the plain of Boha, which was at the base of Mount Gerizim, to deliver to him the kingdom there, following in that manner the law of our lord Joshua (upon whom be peace), that none should be crowned as king except in the aforesaid valley. Thus they used to come, all of them, as it has been declared to the children of Israel and their chiefs of authority, for this is what has been written in the holy law according to the apostle (upon whom be peace), that is, "There shall be a king only when the children of Isarel gather together with their chief men." According to the edict that

this gathering must transpire in this place, they came to it, and they immediately sent for Rehoboam, and for the chief men of Israel, and the chief men of Joseph, who were true to the law, and they all came.

And when Rehoboam arrived at Nâblus to be crowned there amidst the children of Israel, for many had been led astray by him, they said to him, "If you will make light the yoke which your father made heavy upon us, and if you will obey the commandments of God, we will obey you and serve you, and be ready to do your words."

And he answered them, "Come and return after three days."

So the people went, and after that Rehoboam gathered the chief men who lived during the days of his father, and asked them, "What would you counsel me to answer this people?" and they answered him, "If thou wilt be kind to them, they will obey you and will serve you."

But he despised the council of the elders, and gathered the young men who were brought up with him; and as they stood before him, he asked their advice concerning the same matter. He asked them whether he should make light upon them the yoke which his father made heavy.

And the young men answered him in this manner, "Thy reply shall be, 'My little finger is heavier than the thigh of my father, and if my father has caused you to bear a heavy yoke, I will add to your yoke an additional weight. My father has chastised you with a whip, but I will chastise you with scorpions.'"

When the people asked their answer from him, he replied to them with these words, with all cruelty, and he let alone the advice of the elders, and when the people saw, and beheld his cruel reply, they replied to him with one word, and they told him, "There is no portion in David and no share to us in Jesse,

and none of us will remain with you. Thou art not to us a king, and we are not to thee servants. Come, let us go to our tents, O Israel, and oh, thou son of David, go to thy tribe!"

Thus the children of Israel returned to their places, and Rehoboam returned to his city and to the city of his grandfather, David, and he ruled over his city, and when he felt that his kingdom was being destroyed, and that the people of the children of Israel had left him, he sent messages to his minister Adoram to the people of the children of Israel in order to cause them to return according to the advice which the elders had given him from the beginning. And when this messenger arrived, and began to deliver to them the story, they immediately began to stone him with stones.

When this news reached Rehoboam, he immediately began to fortify himself, being afraid of destruction in the city of his own kingdom, Jabish.

The Conquest of Jeroboam—And when Jeroboam heard of the disappointment of Rehoboam, he immediately became courageous, and returned to Nâblus, and conquered those regions, and won to his side a majority of the tribes, and his authority extended, and he oppressed his enemies, and ruled over the tribe of Joseph, and the family of Phinehas the faithful one. And he tortured them with all kinds of tortures, not doing so to the rest of the tribes because they turned against them. So he avenged himself of them, and killed of them a great number, and his tyranny was greater than the tyranny of David.

And the children of Israel were at that time in three divisions. One division used to swear by Mount Gerizim, another division used to swear by the name of Jabish, and a third division was in love with the worship of idols, standing by themselves, and a fourth division stood with Jeroboam, who

went to the city of Sabastaba,¹ and he made it his capital, and placed in it a high priest, and led astray with him six of the tribes of Israel. He also was ruling over the tribe of Joseph, which was the Samaritan people, and ruled over them with a heavy hand. Nevertheless, they were not induced to follow his plans, and they warred against him several times. And they remained faithful to their religion, and held fast to the laws of Moses (upon whom be peace), and to the laws of Joshua and his successor. And whenever he compelled them to depart from the mountain of Gerizim, they used to return to it whenever they had opportunity, and when they were compelled to live far away from it, they used to turn toward it in their prayers, as did their great father, our lord Abraham (upon whom be peace).

The False Claim of Jeroboam.—But Rehoboam and his people, who were of the tribe of Judah, and a few from the other tribes, when they returned to the city of David, which is the city of Jabish, they claimed that it was the holy place, and that there is no other holy place beside it, and they surnamed it Jerusalem. When they became numerous through other tribes, their brothers, the children of Israel, did not like it, and there took place many wars between them on account of this claim. That city was destroyed often, and its inhabitants were killed, and the tribe of Judah did not dare to rebuke the temple, which was founded by Solomon in the threshing-place of the Jebusites, where they used to offer their sacrifices, and followed the customs of their ancestors. But in the Torah, the five books which descended to them through our lord Moses (upon whom be peace), there is no indication of the veracity of their claim that it is the one place to which

¹ Sabaste, the city of Samaria.

direction in prayer should be made, and that it is the genuine place.

The Destruction of Jerusalem.—Jeroboam and the people over whom he ruled were captured by the Assyrian kings, and his cities were taken from him; even Ælia was destroyed, and Sabastaba, and all the children of Israel became enslaved, and their villages were taken. And after Sabastaba was destroyed and was ploughed like a field, a man from the tribe of Joseph, who was wealthy, bought that city from one of the princes of the Assyrians. His name was Samar, and some of the Assyrians who lived among the children of Israel to this day called Shamaroneen, and they lived near by the aforesaid Sabastaba, which was bought by the Israelitish man from the aforesaid Samar for two talents of silver. He built up some of its destroyed places, and he dwelt in it, he and his people, for a long time, and thus the name Samaria was given it, which was the name of the city, because it was called Samaria on account of the fact that the man who took it by violence was called Samar, and thus its original inhabitants were called.

The Babylonian Exile.—Then the Ammonites destroyed for the second time that city. That was in the days of Joakim.¹ That was almost in the same days as when Bachtasar,² the king of the Persians, was ruling. This king was living in the regions of Orak, and Joakim was governor over the children of Israel through his will. Then Bachtasar came to the land of the Israelites, and besieged Ælia, because it was well fortified, and he conquered it, and he despoiled it, and all its vessels. And he exiled the priests and elders of Israel, and removed the tribe of Joseph from those regions in which they were living to the land of Babel. And he also exiled the rest of the tribes of Israel, and commanded them to go into the region of

¹ Jehoiakim.

² Nebuchadrezzar.

Haran, and thus all the children of Israel were scattered in those lands. And that exile took place in the year 3550¹ of the creation of the world, according to the reckoning of the Samaritan people. The king of the Assyrians killed every one who would not go with him; thus many of the children of Israel were compelled to go with him, even to the land of the Chaldeans, and so many terrible and great misfortunes fell upon the Israelites which the pen could not write in details, and which could not be measured by the tongue. And thus the threatening was fulfilled upon them which is given in the book of Deuteronomy, in the twenty-eighth chapter and sixty-second verse: "Ye shall be few in number, whereas ye were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because ye would not obey the will of the Lord." Their holy places thus became desolate, and they remained in that exile for a period of seventy years, and one party of the tribe of Israel returned to the land of Canaan after seventy years, and dwelt in it.

The Immigrants to Israel, and Their Hardships.—But immediately the Greek (Ionian) kings came and exiled them again, after they had dwelt in the land of Canaan for a year, one hundred and thirty-one years, and the king which exiled them came first against the city of Ælia, and conquered it, and killed many of its inhabitants, and took its women and children to the land of Babel, and then departed for Samaria against the tribe of Joseph, and exiled them. The king of the Ionians also induced foreign people to emigrate to the land of Canaan instead of the children of Israel. And the living in Canaan became costly, and there was a great famine, which continued for a period of seven years, and many perished; even the ferocious animals attacked them. Then they sent immediately

¹ This, instead of 722, would be 740 B.C., as the Samaritans reckon the birth of Christ 4290 A.M.

to the king Sorday,¹ for he was the great king in those days, and he dwelt in the land of Haran. They told him, saying, "The land of Canaan, where thou sent us to dwell, almost caused us to perish, because of the scarcity of the rain, and because of the unfruitfulness of its land, and because of the ferocious animals; and when the rain falls, and some hope is found, what is planted immediately becomes rotten, and the olive trees throw down their fruit, and behold we are about to perish, and all those who are with us, even our cattle." And they asked him to get information from the children of Israel who had lived in that land as to what they had done, in order that this might be averted, and the state of the earth which was so unfruitful might be changed; for after they had remained in those conditions they feared they would all perish, no doubt, on account of the exposed location and the audacity of the wild animals.

And when this news reached the king Sorday, he immediately commanded for a man to go before him, and that man was called Abdullah, the leader, the high priest, and also Aza, the son of Shamoon, who were among the leaders in the tribe of Joseph, who lived in Samaria. And he told them that news had reached him from the dwellers of the land of Canaan of what happened in it.

And the high priest Abdullah, herald of Aza, the son of Shamoon, who was among the leaders of the tribe of Joseph, when he heard these words from the king, immediately gave him a reply, saying, "Know ye, O king, that we have a holy mountain, called Mount Gerizim, and it is the house of God. And when our fathers came out of Egypt, and after they had lived forty years in the wilderness, and when they entered the land of Canaan, the Lord made them to know that they should

¹ Cyrus.

make sacrifices and offer all their offerings in that mountain. And throughout all the times in which our forefathers offered there, and in which we offered after them, the land continued to be fruitful. And know ye, therefore, that this misfortune which has taken place in the land of Canaan shall not cease until we return to that mountain toward which we direct ourselves in prayer, and until we arrive at it and worship Allah, our God (may he be extolled), and we hope from him forgiveness, for he hears and he answers. And may he cause the heart of the king to be inclined toward us that he may permit us to return to our country, and to do what is necessary for us to do. We hope from his kindness (may he be extolled), that when this shall take place none of those things, neither famine nor disease, shall happen, and we are promised by God this shall be so. And we have a testimony to that effect, for that shall take place when we return, as he made us to know through his law, and perhaps he will be gracious unto us and return us in his mercy to our own land."

The Return under Cyrus.—Then they revealed to him the lines of the law which contain the threatenings and the promises concerning these things. The king consequently saw that it was right, and the Lord God put it in his mind, and he commanded that these things should be done, and he allowed the children of Israel to return to their land, that its inhabitants might possess their own place, in order that the land might be prosperous, for it was then a part of his kingdom. He then commanded the elders and the leaders of the rest of the tribes of Israel to go before him, that he might give them permission to return to their land, and to build their houses and worship. So the leaders of the tribe of Judah and their people, and the leaders of the tribe of Joseph, who were in those days, came before the king, and had a consultation

with him concerning these matters, in order that he might issue for them a decree for their return to their land and for the building of the house of their worship. And the opinion of the tribe of Joseph, and those who were of the family of Phinehas, the son of Eleazar, and their families, was that the building of the house of worship and the place of pilgrimage should be the mountain of Gerizim, but the opinion of the tribe of Judah and their families was that the building of the house of worship and the place of pilgrimage should be in Ælia, which is the city of David. But the people of Joseph made the king Sorday understand that what the children of Israel were commanded to do according to the Torah, which descended through our lord Moses (upon whom be peace), was that the building of the temple of worship should be upon the mountain of Gerizim, and that it should be the place of pilgrimage, and where all its ceremonies of worship should take place, and that the children of Israel were commanded to make pilgrimages to it, and that the Lord had chosen it from the beginning in order that his name might be sanctified upon it. That mountain is indeed sanctified; and thus the people of Joseph showed forth all the arguments as they were found in the Torah, and declared them to the king and before the leaders of Judah.

Zerubbabel and Sanballat.—The leader of the children of Israel was a man by the name of Zerubbabel, the son of Sharsar, for he was the one advanced over all of them; but the leader of the tribe of Joseph was the high priest called Abdullah, and there was with him Nathaniel of the family of Phinehas. The superintendant over the people of Joseph was a kind man by the name of Sanballat. The aforesaid was a learned, wise, and strong man, and he explained the arguments and defended his chance against the people of Judah,

and he refuted the pretensions of Zerubbabel, and maintained that the mountain of Gerizim is the place toward which prayer direction should be made. It is the place of worship and of the Shekinah itself, the House of God, and he made it plain, proposing arguments from the statements of the Torah, the laws which are with both peoples.

The only answer the Jews gave him was, "We have learned from David and Solomon that the temple which is in Ælia is the place of worship to which prayer direction should be taken." But they could not bring an argument from the Torah, for there was none, since the Torah existed with both of them before any alteration was made, and since in it the plain arguments proclaiming as to the mountain of Gerizim were as they are still in the Torah, which is among the Samaritan people.

And when Sorday the king heard these debates which took place between them, and when he saw that the appeal of Phinehas and of the people of Joseph was strong and open-minded, and that the claim of the Jews was only backsliding and lies, with no evidence and with no tradition to their claims, the king Sorday said, "Go ye, go and build a temple in the mountain of Gerizim for worship. Go ye to it, and build it."

But Zerubbabel became angry at these words, and he showed forth his tendency of refusal, and answered and said, "No, indeed, except in Ælia, as we have already proposed."

The king Sorday was wroth by the answer of Zerubbabel, and he became angry with his people also, and he rebuked him, and expelled him, and was exceedingly wroth against him, and against all the people of Judah. He called for Sanballat, and advanced him and gave him honors, and bestowed upon him the privilege of being the ruler of the province of the regions of Canaan, that is, all Syria, and he gave him per-

mission to return to the Holy Land, and that he might build up the mountain of Gerizim, especially there the temple. He had authority, and he could do as he pleased in all that he desired to be done, and he kept the people of Judah from going back with the rest of the tribes of Israel. The children of Israel were given the liberty of following Sanballat or of remaining in the land of Haran and Babel.

From that time a quarrel took place between Sanballat and Zerubbabel and his people. And Sorday the king was angry with the people of Judah, and he killed thirty-six of their leaders, and he honored the leaders of the tribe of Joseph, and therefore the enmity became great, and increased between them and the Jews.

Changes in the Jewish Customs.—The Jews, however, began to alter the ceremonies of their religion to spite the tribe of Joseph, and the differences began to increase, but Sanballat and his people, and all those who befriended them were joyful and happy, and many of the children of Israel joined them in those times. Those who were following the counsel of Eli, the priest, and Samuel, who were with the people of Zerubbabel, and the number of the people of Sanballat when they returned from the exile, was three hundred thousand men, with the exception of women and children. This event took place through the command of Sorday the king, who caused them to dwell in the land of Canaan, who gave them permission to return to their country, though many had perished.

The Return of the Northern Tribes.—The people of Sanballat arrived at the land of Canaan, and they purified themselves in the valley of Badan, and they went up to Mount Gerizim and built upon it a temple, and dwelt round about, and they built it up and they fortified it from all points, and their

leaders were of the family of the great high priest Abdullah and his brother Nathaniel. They established there an altar whose length was thirty-five cubits; and they made a candlestick of pure gold, and a table of gold, and displayed upon it the shew bread, according to the obligatory command which is in the book, according to the fashion which was adopted during the days of God's pleasure; and they offered an offering of one hundred head of oxen upon that altar, and God was pleased with them, and God turned his pleasure upon them, and God brought back upon the Holy Land his blessings, and he was gracious to the people. The rain fell in showers upon their plantations, and the land became exceedingly fruitful, and they dwelt in the mountain of Gerizim, and in the cities round about which were in the region of Ashan (Syria), in peace and in happiness during the days of the king Sorday until Abasarwal became ruler, and reigned over the whole land.

Hostility between the Jews and Samaritans.—During the first days of his reign he oppressed exceedingly the Jews who were in exile in his country. Nevertheless, they prospered, and brought him great revenues and taxes, and their leaders became intimate with him, and among them Zerubbabel and Nehemiah, the priest, who were among the elders of the Jews in those days. And they bribed him with a great sum of money, and they served him faithfully, and then they begged from him permission to allow them to build the house of their holy place. Permission was given them accordingly, and they took from him a decree having his signature, and which was sealed with his seal, that this end might be carried out. They turned back with a great crowd of people and they came to the city of Jabish and began to rebuild it.

And this news reached the tribe of Joseph, and they vexed

them, and withstood them, and expelled them. They incited the king Sorday against them, and he issued orders to the tribe of Joseph to destroy whatever they had built. Immediately the descendants of Phinehas and Joseph assaulted with a strong hand the city of Jabish, and destroyed all that the Jews had built, and this was the cause of great anger to the Jews, and the enmity became great between the people of Joseph and the Jews.

Artaxerxes and Esther.—But under Phoresch the king, and Dahartales and Ahoresh and Artahstha, kings of Persia, the Jews were able by his witchcraft to approach the king, and they presented him with the famous Esther, and they were brought near the kings through their maid servants, and this was done through the advice of Ezra and Nehemiah until they won the heart of the king Ashoresch under the direction of Esther and through the witchcraft of their witches. And they took from him a second decree to build the city of Ælia, and to rebuild there the temple. Ezra was given absolute authority in whatever he desired to do in the land of Syria, and was given many financial helps from his treasury, in order to fulfill his plans. So Ezra stood by him, and all his people and their leaders, and came to the land of Canaan with strong hand through the help of Ashoresch, and came to Ælia, and fortified it, and built a great temple in it, and built its walls, and ruled there over the land of Canaan.

The Inventions of Ezra.—When Ezra and his people became settled in that land, and had found the people of Joseph were in the best condition so far as fulfilling their religious duties is concerned, many of his people were convinced to turn from their foolish way and to return to their true religion. The Jews had no book in their possession, and they could not read the Torah, and they only had the name Israelite, but the

majority of them were in ignorance and negligence like illiterate people, for the Torah was lost from among them during the reign of Sorday the king.

And Ezra, seeing these things, began to gather books from the legends and from some chronicles and narratives. He invented things which never occurred, and he wrote them in the Assyrian writing, which is still found in the books of the Jews. He began to gather into books as he thought best, and he gathered narratives of the Israelites, and began to alter according to his judgment. Then he mentioned the people of Samaria, whose origin is from the tribe of Joseph and descendants of the tribe of Phinehas, and he called them Samaritans. He said that they were Gotin (Gentiles?). It is recorded in the book of Kings, the seventeenth chapter, and he filled it with many phrases which are refuted by us and which have no truth in them. All of this was because of his hatred of the aforesaid people, whom he called Samaritans.

The Two Pronunciations of the Unutterable Name of "YHWH."—And he invented the statement that they worshiped the dove, an idol Ashina, because the aforesaid nation pronounced the name of the Almighty, according to their custom, "YHWH," which the Jews read "Adonai," but the Samaritans indicate by the name "Shimeh." He therefore invented against them the story that they read it "Ashimeh," and that is nothing but untruth.

The Modern Hebrew of the Jewish Writings.—Ezra composed his books in the Chaldean writings, and the Assyrian language, according to the language which his people had learned in their exile, because they were then ignoring the Hebrew language; and that was indeed because they hated the Israelites who had recently been called Samaritans. Thus the Jews abandoned the Hebrew writing, but it is still kept by the

Samaritan people. He compelled his people by violence to keep those copies which he had invented, and to teach them to their children and their children's children, and this was on account of the anger and vengeance which is rebuked by God (may He be extolled), and thus God took away from the Jews the copy of the true Torah.

On account of the great wickedness of Ezra and his persecutions during his reign, all the rest of the tribes of Israel became scattered and mixed up with the nations, and they were scattered unto the ends of the earth.

And Ezra and his people created many things of the enmity of the Samaritans which was illicit, and he made a war between them and the Jews, for pretended fear lest the Samaritans should come in among the Jews and bring corruption to the book of rules and ritual which he had given them. And the Jews continued to live according to the plan which Ezra had made for them which is unto this day.

The Diminution of the Samaritans.—Thus the Jews opposed the Samaritans in everything, and they continued to live accordingly for many years, opposing them and ruling over them and they were the cause of the small number, together with what happened to them through the ruling of the Franks. And through the changing of the religion many a misfortune came upon them, among them decrees that they might be smitten by the sword until they all would perish to the last.

The Power of Islam.—And when our lord Mohammed appeared, this nation was very numerous, and they possessed many cities and villages until the year 700 of the Hegira. And there were in the city of Cæsarea, and round about it, about thirty thousand whom Salahuddin Alioseph exiled, a man from the great ameers, Islam. And there was a great number of them in Damascus, and Asham, and in Egypt, and



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in Aleppo, and in Gaza, and in the city of Joppa, besides those who lived in Nâblus and in this mountain. Through the aggressive power of Islam, and through the laws of religious liberty, and before the Osmanite régime, and because there was none to direct them, the things which God threatened in his Holy Law took place.

The Present Status of the Samaritan People.—As is was prophesied, they became very few, and the famous cities shall none of them stand, according to his holy Torah in the book of Deuteronomy, twenty-eighth chapter, sixty-second verse; that is, “Ye shall be few in number,” and “All shall perish from the land which you shall long to possess.” There are many threatenings similar to this which indicate this present condition which came upon this nation, and that is only in order that they may suffer for their guilt and for the guilt of their forefathers, according to His saying (may He be extolled) in the book of Leviticus, twenty-sixth chapter, forty-first verse; that is, “And they shall be made to atone for their guilt.”

But this nation carry out the ancient customs according to the Mosaic law as well as they can, and have always offered the proper prayers to the God of all creation, that he might keep them from all harm, misfortune, and all violence.

PRAISE BE TO GOD, THE LORD OF TWO WORLDS, AMEN.



سید ہرون النکھنی
ارول بطایفہ الہدی
نامی

JACOB, SON OF AARON, HIGH PRIEST OF THE SAMARITANS
AT SHECHEM.